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ABSTRACT

Financial partnerships are developing between local communities and schools based on the desire to improve public education by raising private sector funds to offset shrinking tax dollars. Those who develop education foundations for a school system must know the basics: defining the school system's role, determining what the fund can and cannot do, and ensuring that the school's goals and priorities are not undermined. Although there are no firm rules to follow, there is agreement that foundations should be separate entities from the school system and that the school board and administration should be involved. Once a foundation is established, it must operate according to bylaws, have a board of directors, and, if possible, a staff and office. The most critical aspect of a foundation, after raising funds, is the allocation of funds. This area should be addressed before the foundation is established, because it has the most potential for controversy. Mutual trust must be established between the foundation board and the school system. Educators should review their policy manual and administrative procedures to be sure they can support a mutually beneficial relationship with a local foundation. Each community must determine its own goals and establish the mechanisms for reaching them. A list of education foundation sources is provided. (MD)

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Updating SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES
Volume 14|Number 9|October 1983
A component of the Educational Policies Service of the National School Boards Association provided to NSBA Direct Affiliates and EPS subscribers

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Private-sector funding—handle with care!

With public attention focused on public schools this may be the perfect time for school systems to capitalize on high community interest by creating mechanisms to foster private-sector funding. Many communities already are enjoying the generosity of local funding organizations. Others are eager to learn how private-sector funding works and how to build financial partnerships with their own communities.

How these partnerships originate and operate, however, varies from community to community. This fact was made clear at the October 1982 School Foundation Movement Conference in San Francisco that attracted almost 400 participants—some to share experiences and others to learn. It also is the view of the Public Education Fund, a non-profit organization that opened its doors in February 1983 to provide assistance to communities formulating plans for private-sector funding. In addition, *The Local Education Foundation: A New Way to Raise Money for Schools*, published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in May, emphasizes the individuality of local foundations.

But these financial partnerships do have something in common: the desire to improve and enrich public education beyond what shrinking tax dollars can provide. And, by seeking tax-deductible donations from the community-at-large, they also provide more than dollars—increased awareness of school systems' goals and achievements and broader community support of public schools.

"These funds bring new constituents to the table who learn what school boards face," says David Bergholz, president of the Public Education Fund. Bergholz, whose experience with private public education funds stems from his long-term association with the Allegheny Conference Education Fund in Pittsburgh, says, "If you evaluate what the fund has done for Pittsburgh, it's clear that it has put the public schools on the agenda of the town. People now are interested in the issue."

Learn the basics

Before your school system jumps on the bandwagon, however, find out what the movement's pioneers have learned through experience to ensure that you maximize the advantages of private-sector funding—and minimize its disadvantages. Know what the school system's role is in these partnerships. Determine what a local education fund can and should do for your school system, and what it shouldn't. And ensure, through policy, that your school system's goals and priorities aren't undermined by well-meaning but more narrow community attitudes and decisions.

Unfortunately, there are no firm rules to follow in establishing a local education fund. Education foundations currently operating have varying histories. But local attitudes, needs, and strength of commitment to improving education in community schools have a lot to do with how interest in a local foundation is generated and sustained.

For example, the San Francisco Education Fund, founded in 1976, is the result of a citizens' advisory group seeking ways to turn around the deterioration of the San Francisco school system. In Washington, D.C., however, the Washington Parents Group Fund is the outcome of a group of lawyers providing assistance to parents through legal advice and services. Pittsburgh's Allegheny Conference Education Fund stems from the interest of a civic organization and the business community in supporting and improving the city's schools. And the Lorain city school system in Ohio is building an endowment fund under the umbrella of the Greater Lorain County Community Foundation.

But, no matter how private-sector funding evolves, the movement's experienced leaders tend to agree that education foundations should be established as separate entities from the school system. If the foundation is independent, and not simply an extension of the school administration or school board, funds are easier to raise. The formal separation also avoids mixing of monies which could result in accusations of funding inequities between communities.

Establishing the foundation as a separate entity, however, doesn't mean that school board members and administrators shouldn't or can't be involved. Especially during the planning stages, it is important for the school system to be directly represented. Community members, who may ultimately be the decision makers about what gets funded, need to understand clearly what the immediate and long-range goals and problems of the school system are. They need to understand relevant school board policy, and to recognize that the authority of the school board is not up for grabs.

According to Bergholz, "It has to be a brokered relationship. The private entity is trying to be helpful. It isn't out to threaten the school board's given powers. And the school board has to be sure that the private funding organization is supportive, trying to do positive things, and not trying to intrude in school policy issues."

Once it is legally established as a public foundation (the process must be guided by an attorney to ensure

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conformance with state and federal tax-exemption laws and regulations), the foundation should operate according to its own bylaws. It should have its own board of directors and, if possible, its own staff and office space. When school staff or school board members are included on a foundation's board, they usually serve in an *ex officio* capacity. But their presence can ensure that the communications process is ongoing, and that the foundation's planning and activities will not conflict with school board policy, goals, and needs.

Money matters

Education foundations use a variety of strategies to raise money. They range from seeking grants from foundations with broader goals and donations from the business community to fund-raising luncheons, cake sales, and raffles. Fund raising is probably the foundation's most important job because without the money it can't achieve its primary goal—improving and enriching the education of students.

School staff and school board members can assist in fund raising in several indirect ways. Announcements of fund-raising events, for example, can be published in school newsletters. Also, school facilities can be made available for fund-raising activities. And sharing up-to-date information about the schools—needs, achievements, goals—enables the foundation's fund raisers to speak to potential donors intelligently about why private-sector funds are necessary. Felix Duag, coordinator of public information and community relations for the San Francisco school system, adds, "We provide all the necessary information on Education Fund grants in our district directory that goes to all administrators. Building principals then make sure the teachers have the necessary information."

But, a more critical aspect of the relationship between school systems and foundations regarding money is what happens once money is raised: the allocation process. Who decides what gets funded? What is the school board's role in monitoring allocations? Are there programs or budget items that shouldn't be funded by non-school organizations? If such questions aren't answered before the foundation is established, the potential for controversy will be great. Unfortunately, the answers to these questions can't be found in a book. They vary from community to community.

Some education foundations, for example, are fund-raising agencies that give funds to the school system for allocation by the school board or superintendent. This process is most common in California where local foundations proliferated in the 1970s as a result of Proposition 13 and the aftermath of reduced tax-dollar support. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Education Fund, for example, gives money directly to the school system. It stipulates, however, that the funds cannot be used to pay salaries of current employees or employee benefits. This method of allocation is based on the view that the school system best knows what it needs, and that it is the school system's responsibility to determine and fund its priorities.

Other foundations allocate funds to specific programs, services, or purchases, usually through an application and review process. This method allows donors to earmark funds for certain programs or schools—an enticement not necessarily available if the school system is determining the allocations. The Washington Parents Group Fund (WPGF) allocates its money based on review of proposals submitted by parents representing the 12 schools associated with the Fund. WPGF funds two-thirds of a project, and parents raise the remainder.

The San Francisco Education Fund (SFEF) also allocates funds directly to applicants who may be teachers, principals, parents, students, or administrators. Direct application by individuals provides an incentive to be creative; grants to individuals provide a boost to morale. "The greatest benefit," says Duag, "is to the teachers. Even though this is a time when we're pinching pennies, there is opportunity for teachers to try new ideas and be rewarded for their efforts.

The SFEF application and funding process includes review of applications by the Fund's staff, screening and research by the allocations committee, and voting by the full board of directors. Examples of some projects funded by SFEF are a nutrition program for bilingual students ($800) and expansion of an after-school theatre program ($3,000). "The school system doesn't have a role in the final decision making," says Duag, "other than to approve all grants in a block."

Pittsburgh's Education Fund makes checks payable directly to the teachers whose proposals are funded. "I can't think of any proposals that have been inappropriate," says Bergholz. "And direct awards to teachers gives them the feeling that someone cares about them besides their peers."

In contrast to San Francisco and Pittsburgh where the school systems have little control over a teacher's proposal for funding, the Beverly Hills Education Foundation (California) allocates funds based on proposals prepared by the school system itself. The Foundation decides which proposals to fund, but the school system controls what is applied for. In 1982-83, $50,000 of the total $200,000 awarded by the Foundation went to a mini-grant program for teachers. The mini-grants are applied for by individual teachers, and the awards are made by the school system.

Protection in policy

While a foundation may seem to be the answer to a school system's prayers for more money to improve and enrich the educational program—and in some cases to sustain it, the potential exists for a school board to lose control of its authority when funding decisions are made outside the system. Establishing mutual trust and cooperation with the fund's board and staff is essential, of course. But, school board policies also are essential.

Most school boards already have policies that can provide guidelines

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for relationships with outside funding organizations; applying for grants is not a new activity for school systems. You should review your policy manual and administrative procedures, however, to be sure that your policies and procedures can support a mutually beneficial relationship with a local education fund.

Education foundations usually judge proposals according to criteria that keep in mind the views of the school system. The SFEF, for example, judges applications by several criteria, including that "each proposal should address high priority needs at the school and show that funding is not available through state, federal or district revenues." The allocations committee also considers whether the building principal will stand behind the idea, how the administration will view the proposal, and if the project can be accomplished within existing school resources.

Nevertheless, your policy on *Grants From Private Sources* (DFC) should include that all grant applications must be reviewed by the school board or administration to ensure that all programs and activities will relate to the goals and priorities of the school system. Guidelines regarding evaluation of completed projects also could be contained in this policy.

Ensuring equity among schools in your community also may be a policy matter. If foundation funds are allocated to individual teachers, for example, some teachers may lack the necessary skills to develop a grant application, and some schools may not be sharing in the benefits of private-sector funding. The school system, as well as the local foundation, should monitor grant allocations to ensure that funding is equitable throughout the system. Support of teacher initiative and creativity also should be contained in policy, and consideration should be given to in-service training or administrative assistance for teachers who need help in writing grant proposals.

Your policies and procedures regarding equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, security, and insurance also relate to education foundation projects. If a funded project includes purchase of a microcomputer, for example, who is responsible for the equipment—the school system or the foundation? Such questions should be answered during the planning phase, and guidelines should be contained in your policy on *Public Gifts to the Schools* (KH).

Useful resources

It is clear that establishing and working with a local education fund is not a simple matter. Each community must determine its goals, and then develop the mechanism for reaching them. Seeking advice and assistance from multiple sources is recommended because no one method is applicable to all communities. Existing foundations are willing to answer questions based on their own experiences. In fact, the many inquiries the San Francisco Education Fund received led to its sponsorship of the 1982 conference on the education foundation movement.

The Public Education Fund (PEF) also is available to assist communities. Established with seed money from the Ford Foundation, PEF is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. Operating with its own board of directors, PEF intends to support local initiatives through a grant program and technical assistance. The first grants are being awarded this fall, and technical assistance is underway. "The proposals coming in have a commonality of purpose," says Bergholz, "but each is tailored to its local scene. It's obvious that there are people not involved in the public schools who want to help in a positive way." PEF welcomes inquiries about its activities, and invites school systems to request being placed on their mailing list. ■

Education foundation information sources

Public Education Fund, 600 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219, 412/391-3235.

San Francisco Education Fund, 833 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94103, 415/541-0575 (*Works in Progress: A Report of the School Foundation Movement Conference*, no charge).

National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091, 703/860-0200 (*The Local Education Foundation: A New Way to Raise Money for Schools*, $3 each).

promotes only one side of an issue, invites only one candidate to speak to a class, or distributes only one candidate's campaign materials to students. A one-sided approach can be viewed as a teacher's attempt to influence students (and their parents), rather than as a worthwhile civics lesson. Your policies should provide guidelines to control abuses of this kind.

Usually policies state that outside speakers and special interest materials, for example, must be approved by the principal or other authority prior to their use in the classroom, and that they must directly relate to and support the curriculum objectives. Also, teachers have the responsibility to ensure that all facts and aspects of an issue are presented in an objective manner, and that class discussion is open to all points of view. In general, teachers should emphasize *why* and *how* to think, but not *what* to think.

Your policies regarding advertising in schools and fund raising also should contain references to politics. Controls usually are established to prohibit commercial advertising and soliciting on school property, and campaign posters and other political materials fall into the same category. Use of these materials for instruction, such as an exhibit on the campaign process, should receive prior approval from the principal. The decision to permit use of these materials should be based on the instructional value of the materials, and whether they might cause disruption in the school building.

School board role

Needless to say, school board members should fall within the same constraints as school employees, with no infringement on their constitutional rights. Although school board members continually are involved in politics, either directly or indirectly, they should be mindful of how they use their positions to advance a particular candidate or political point of view. Using school board meetings to voice partisan positions or endorsements, for example, is inappropriate. And political activities on the part of a board member should be recognized as those of an individual, and not representative of the board as a whole. Board policy on ethics should include references to these privileges and restraints. ■

Trends

Connect with colleges to expand curriculum

Colleges are being blamed for turning out poorly trained teachers. At the same time, high schools are the brunt of criticism for turning out graduates who need remedial classes in reading, writing, computing, and thinking critically before they can cope with college-level work. While educators, legislators, governors, commissioners—and the general public—try to come to grips with how to improve the situation, colleges and local school systems already are working together on another front: Collaborating to teach college courses to high school students. In some programs college professors teach college courses at the high school. In others high school faculty members are trained to teach college courses at their schools. A third option enables high school students to enroll in courses on a college campus. Whatever the method, the benefits are numerous.

Meeting student needs

High school students—especially those in gifted and talented or accelerated programs—frequently complete their graduation requirements in less than four years. Some students are ready to move on to advanced work in math, science, or the humanities. In other cases there may be insufficient variety of courses taught in a school, perhaps due to declining enrollment or decreased funding, resulting in less than a full day of school for seniors—and senior boredom.

Some students consider early graduation. But frequently they want to participate with their friends in high school activities such as senior prom and graduation itself. The availability of college level courses to these students makes it possible for them to be graduated on schedule and still meet their educational needs. Also, the transition from high school to college may be eased for students who have some exposure to college-level work prior to full-time enrollment. Then, too, if students earn college credit as high school students, they can take advanced courses as freshmen, and it may be possible to reduce the overall costs of a four-year college education.

Additional benefits

In addition to meeting student needs for high level courses, cooperative high school/college programs can lead to improved curriculum for both institutions. For example, students taking advanced physics in high school may find the course work duplicated in their first college physics course. When duplication takes place with a purpose, such as to study 19th century history from a different perspective, it can be worthwhile. But in cases where duplication isn't even recognized because college and high school staffs don't communicate, students are probably wasting their time.

Cooperative high school/college programs should lead to increased and improved communication between faculties and curriculum planners at both levels. Review of curriculum needs and sequences will point out gaps and duplications, and should enable curriculum planners to articulate course objectives better.

The Lindbergh School District (St. Louis), with a student body of 6,200, initiated a cooperative program with St. Louis University about a decade ago. According to Sanford Pridy, principal of Lindbergh Senior High School, the cooperative program "tends to upgrade the standard high school curriculum. Courses are designed cooperatively, and university and high school faculty review the course offerings every year. College classes in English, social studies, math, and foreign languages are taught."

Plan for success

Before starting a cooperative program, be sure you know what your objectives are and how you intend to reach them. In addition, make sure that such a program conforms with your school system's instructional goals and school board policy, and be ready to revise or add policy if necessary.

Establishing liaison with a local university or college and building staff support are essential first steps. Questions that should be answered before moving forward include:

- What student needs will be met by the program, and which students will be eligible?
- Who will teach the classes, and where will they be taught?
- How will faculty be selected, evaluated, and, if necessary, trained?
- How will the curriculum be planned and evaluated?
- What costs will be incurred by the school system, college, or students?
- Will credits count toward high school and/or college graduation?
- Will credits be transferable to other colleges and universities?

The Lindbergh program is reserved for seniors recommended for high-level academic work. "Of the 2,300 students in the high school, about 100 are in the program," according to Pridy. "There are very few dropouts, probably because the selection process is effective. We make it a practice to keep the standards high. If you dip too low, the unprepared student is doomed to failure."

Classes are taught by interested and qualified high school teachers certified by the university. "Several of our teachers teach at the university during the summer," says Pridy. "We don't provide extra training, but the program is closely monitored."

Lindbergh students pay $18 per credit hour for the classes—considerably less than what these courses cost a college student. Credits earned are counted toward high school graduation and also as college credits. "We keep track of which colleges accept these as transfer credits," Pridy says. "But we also advise students not to request the credit until they are enrolled at the college of their choice. Experience shows that some colleges and universities don't accept the credits at first, but do so later on—perhaps after they see the student in action." ■

Tips 'n Techniques

Put a hold on politics in schools

When autumn comes, Election Day isn't far behind. Well before the first Tuesday in November—or the date of any local elections—your school board should review its policies relating to politics and elections to make sure that they are up-to-date and comprehensive. These policies encompass: staff and student involvement; academic freedom; controversial issues and speakers; advertising in schools; and relations with election authorities.

To assess how well your school system is responding to policy needs in these areas, review your policies with instructional goals and the constitutional rights of students and employees uppermost in mind. Political and/or election activities permitted in your schools should support your system's instructional program and—at the very least—not interfere with it. They also must be in keeping with court decisions regarding employee and student First Amendment rights. Your school attorney is the best judge to determine conformance of your policies and procedures with court decisions.

Staff rights

The rights of school employees to participate in partisan politics must be dealt with in school board policy. Staff members must know (1) if they are permitted to make public their support of political candidates for office, (2) if they can run for office themselves, and (3) if they will be permitted to retain their positions while campaigning or if elected.

Most school systems recognize the constitutional rights of employees to participate fully in the democratic process. Reservations surface, however, when the employee's political activities or responsibilities of elected office impose on, or interfere with, the responsibilities of his or her school position and policies on use of school facilities.

Restrictions on partisan political activities usually include limitations on use of school time, facilities, or equipment for fund raising, distribution of campaign materials, and production of such materials. They also restrict enlistment of students for campaign work during school hours or on school property. In addition, school employees should be advised to make clear at all times that they are speaking and acting as individuals, and not as representatives of the school system.

Some school systems require staff members who are candidates for political office or elected officials to take a leave of absence from their school duties. Others allow the superintendent to decide individual cases based on the demands of the particular campaign, whether the elected position requires full-time or part-time attention, and/or whether a conflict of interest will exist.

Kenneth Plum, a member of the Virginia House of Delegates and director, office of adult and community education, Fairfax County Public Schools, takes unpaid leave of absence during each legislative session. "I have to devote full time to legislative duties during the annual session," says Plum, "but during the remainder of the year I can fulfill the duties of elected office in the evening and on weekends."

Regarding the potential for conflict of interest, Plum states: "The School Board sets my salary and the Board of Supervisors (county government) allocates the funds, so state legislative actions don't affect me personally. My constituents elect me to represent them on many issues other than education, such as roads and transportation. Also, I sometimes find I have to vote opposite to the Fairfax County School Board stand on an education issue."

Election activities

In many communities election authorities use schools as polling sites. In those communities where schools are open on Election Day, the school system should have veto power on selection of the particular schools for this purpose. "We negotiate with the county election authorities regarding the feasibility of using a particular school for voting," comments Bob Baldwin, director of public information for the Des Moines Independent Community School District, a K-12 system of 39,000 students. "Considerations are space availability, traffic patterns, and student safety."

Some local election authorities also use schools as sites for registration of new voters, especially those reaching age 18. The presence of registrars in high schools makes the process easily accessible to students and simple for teachers to encourage. But school policy and procedure should control interruption of classroom time for this purpose.

Instructional goals

Instructional goals, both on the state and local levels, typically include the ability to participate effectively in the decision-making process of community, state, and national public institutions. Educators use a variety of strategies, including the effective operation of student government, to teach citizenship so that students will understand how our society functions in both theory and practice.

The potential for learning citizenship obviously exists when public elections are taking place. Discussing election issues, candidates' platforms, and campaign strategies in the classroom can make the election process relevant to students of all ages. Such activities are especially important for high school students who reach voting age usually before graduation. Through such discussions students can increase their understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship, and also may be inspired to gain first-hand experience as a campaign volunteer.

But problems will arise if a teacher

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Policy Adviser

Is it necessary to provide all teacher unions with access to school mailboxes?—*Assistant Superintendent, Ohio.*

Teacher unions seek access to interschool mail services for the same reasons school systems establish such services: convenience; efficiency; cost-effectiveness. Reaching all members with organizational information in a timely manner and at little expense often is crucial to the viability of local teacher organizations. These factors cause access to interschool mail services to be an important goal for teacher unions to achieve. Being the sole teacher representative to have such access is, of course, the ideal situation for any organization to be in.

School systems usually rely on First Amendment rights to deny exclusive use of the mail system to one organization. But a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Perry Education Association v. Perry Local Educator's Association*, 1983) permits a school system to limit access to mailboxes to one union—in certain circumstances.

Briefly, the case originated in Perry, Indiana, when exclusive use of teacher mailboxes was granted to the Perry Education Association (PEA) in its negotiated agreement following the PEA election as sole representative of the system's teachers. The Supreme Court decision holds that the PEA's status as certified bargaining agent is a sound reason for granting it exclusive access to the teachers' mailboxes. Free speech rights are not denied the rival organization because it still is able to communicate to teachers through other means, i.e. U.S. mail, telephone, verbally. Also, Indiana law ensures access to teachers' mailboxes by rival unions prior to any election to determine a certified bargaining agent. The Supreme Court decision permits school systems to deny access to interschool mail facilities by all teacher organizations because it holds that school mail services are not a "public forum"—open to all if open to one.

The decision may cause certified teacher organizations to seek exclusive use of school mail services in negotiated agreements. But, it also should cause school boards to review their policies on access to mailboxes and delivery services.

In addition to establishing guidelines on access to interschool mail services by teacher organizations, policy should define the purpose of the service and include any restrictions to its use. Usually school systems allow local parent organizations to use the service, but prohibit or control through regulation its use by outside organizations. In addition, restrictions related to types of materials, such as political solicitations, illegal materials, and materials detrimental to the school system, may be included. In general, the mail service should exist to support and enhance the educational program and benefit staff and students. Your school attorney should review your policy and procedures to ensure that they conform with state and federal laws and court decisions. ■

Reminder: NSBA's policy and personnel workshops are scheduled for November 2-4 in Washington, D.C. Contact Nancy Dickinson at NSBA (202/337-7666) for information and registration.

For more policy help

Sample policies and a regulation relating to the topics covered in this month's *Updating* are included in the school administrator's copy of this publication. These are:

Private-sector Funding: DD-R, Funding Proposals and Applications; DFC, Grants from Private Sources.

School Mailboxes: EGAB, Mail and Delivery Services.

Political Activities: GBG, Staff Participation in Political Activities; IICB, Community Resource Persons.

Cooperative Education Programs: LE, Relations with Colleges and Universities.

Additional sample policies, regulations, or exhibits on these and other topics may be requested from the EPS Policy Information Clearinghouse, NSBA, 1055 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

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